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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Belmont

FROM : A. Rosen

SUBJECT: LEE HARVEY OSWALD, aka.
IS - R - C

1 - Mr. Conrad
1 - Mr. DeLoach

DATE: August 28, 1964

1 - Mr. Sullivan
1 - Mr. Trotter
1 - Mr. Belmont
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Malley
1 - Mr. Shroder
1 - Mr. Rogge

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At the request of J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel, President's Commission, Mr. Sebastian F. Latona, Latent Fingerprint Section, Identification Division, and Malley met with Mr. Rankin, Mr. James Wesley Liebeler and Mr. Burt Griffin at the Commission office today.

Mr. Rankin advised that the members of the President's Commission were rather anxious to try to resolve a question that existed relative to the palm prints and latent fingerprints that had been developed on four cartons that were located on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building in the area of the window from which it is believed Oswald shot President Kennedy.

Mr. Rankin advised that the Commission had received from the Bureau a number of pieces of correspondence concerning this matter wherein it was set forth that Oswald's prints had been found among the latent fingerprints and palm prints located on the cartons but they were concerned over the identity of the latent prints which had not been identified. He commented that the Bureau had obtained prints for elimination purposes from the employees of the Texas School Book Depository Building which Mr. Truly, the manager, believed might logically have a reason to have been in the area of these boxes. Mr. Rankin commented that Truly had strenuously objected to all of his personnel being printed at that time due to the loss of work being sustained by his company.

Mr. Rankin stated that the situation now exists where the Commission has not resolved the identity of these prints and it leaves room for the allegation and speculation that Oswald had a co-conspirator in killing President Kennedy. For this reason Mr. Rankin desired the Bureau to attempt to resolve this issue by whatever additional investigation was necessary, fully realizing the scope of the investigation that might be necessary.

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Mr. Rankin stated that he would appreciate the Bureau's making an effort to obtain Mr. Truly's permission to print all of the employees of his company for elimination purposes. He advised that in the event there were any objections on Mr. Truly's part he would appreciate being told so that either he, Mr. Rankin,

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or Chief Justice Warren could contact Mr. Truly to advise him of the importance of this matter to the Commission in order to obtain his full cooperation.

A detailed letter is being prepared by Mr. Rankin's office outlining the investigation that is desired and will be sent to the Bureau as soon as it is ready. In the meantime, the Dallas Office has been filled in concerning the request of the President's Commission in order that they could get started on this rather large request for additional investigation.

In addition to the foregoing, Mr. Rankin requested relative to the latent fingerprint and palm print impressions that a chart be made visually demonstrating the location of the latent fingerprints and palm prints developed on the four cartons. He stated that he would appreciate it if this chart would show the latent finger and palm prints that actually belonged to Oswald as well as the other impressions that were developed and remain unidentified. He stated he would appreciate these being numbered in such a manner that it would be easy for the Commission members or anyone else reviewing this matter at a subsequent date to follow the complete picture relating to these latent prints. Mr. Latona is proceeding with the preparation of the chart as requested.

Request for Additional Data Re Palm Print on Barrel of Assassination Rifle

Mr. Rankin advised several questions had been raised relative to the palm print found on the barrel of the assassination rifle located on the portion of the barrel which was attached to the wooden foregrip of the rifle. Mr. Rankin stated as he understood the matter the palm print located on the rifle barrel had been located by Lieutenant Day of the Dallas Police Department and had been lifted from the rifle by Lieutenant Day. He noted that the Dallas Police Department made no mention of this latent palm print for a number of days following the assassination. He commented that on November 23, the day following the assassination, Chief of Police Curry, when questioned by news media, answered that fingerprints had been found and when asked further questions about identification stated the rifle had been forwarded to the FBI Laboratory. On Sunday, November 24, District Attorney Henry Wade, when questioned before news media, made the statement that a palm print had been found. Mr. Rankin states that based on the information made available to the Commission the existence of this palm print was not volunteered to the Bureau until a specific request was made of the Dallas Police Department.

Mr. Rankin further advised that when Lieutenant Day testified before the President's Commission he stated on finding the print he considered photographing it and had intended to do so and then lifted the latent palm impression. The Commission testimony does not show whether Lieutenant Day did or did not photograph the palm impression that he located prior to lifting the palm print impression.

In view of the foregoing, Mr. Rankin desired that Lieutenant Day of the Dallas Police Department be contacted to ascertain from him whether or not he did or did not make photographs of the latent palm impression that he found on the rifle barrel and if he did, in fact, make photographs to obtain such photographs and make them available to the President's Commission.

Mr. Rankin advised because of the circumstances that now exist there was a serious question in the minds of the Commission as to whether or not the palm impression that has been obtained from the Dallas Police Department is a legitimate latent palm impression removed from the rifle barrel or whether it was obtained from some other source and that for this reason this matter needs to be resolved.

During this discussion about the location of this latent palm impression there was considerable conversation about the use of fingerprint dusting powder, the procedure used by Mr. Latona in his examination of the rifle, and Mr. Rankin requested that an examination be made even at this late date to determine if any trace of a dusting powder other than that used by Mr. Latona could be located on the wooden foregrip of the assassination rifle. The Laboratory has been advised and is handling the requested examination.

Submitted for information.